

10 Tips To Look Great In Photographs

By Master Photographer Bruce Allen Hendricks MPA, F.Ph, F/PPOC-BC, CPP



It's a photographer's responsibility to make their subjects look as fantastic as possible in a portrait. However what do you do when there is no professional around? You can't hide behind the curtains when your friends and family start pointing a camera in your direct forever. Here are 10 tips that will help you look better in any photograph:

#1 Don't square your shoulders to the camera. That will only make you look your widest. Instead turning 45 degrees one way or the other will slim you down in the photograph.

#2 Don't stand flat footed with your weight equally distributed between your feet. When you are turning 45 degrees to the camera, put all your weight on your back foot. Bend/unlock the knee of your front leg and point that foot to the camera. Your front leg is mostly just used for balance. This will flatter your figure make you look more relaxed and comfortable.

#3 If you carry a little extra weight around the mid section you can minimize that in a photograph fairly easily. While standing as explained in the 2nd tip, pop your back hip (changes depending which way you are facing) directly behind and away from the camera slightly. Careful not to over do it. What this does is shift your hips back away from the camera and actually creates a space in-front of you to bring your stomach back more inline with your body vertically. This may take a little practice in a mirror to learn to do subtly when you don't have the guidance of a professional photographer. However once you get the hang of it it'll flatter your figure if you have some extra weight around the middle you want to not be as noticeable.



#4 Low camera angles can be trouble. Unless the photographer is an expert and understands how to flatter the human body, the odds are if you have a couple pounds you would like to lose you'll look 10x heavier than you really. It's much better to speak up and suggest a different angle than to suffer with a bad photograph on someone's phone or social media account forever.

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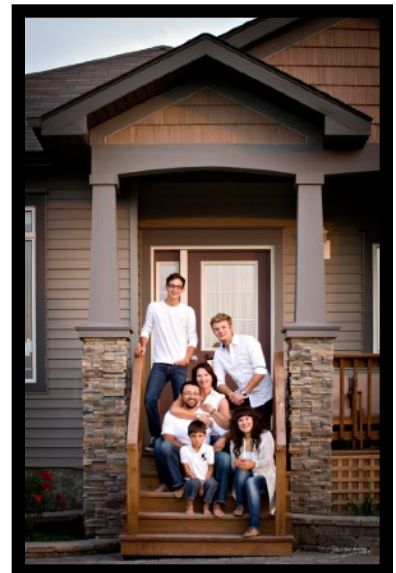


#5 Conversely, a high camera angle where they are photographing down on you usually is extremely flattering. It slims the body and stretches the neck as you look up, getting rid of any potential double-chin issues. Also when looking up you can get more light into your eyes which always flatters a person.

#6 Speaking of necks... Double chins are not flattering in photographs. However there is a simple way to minimize them - acting like a Turkey. Seriously. When you stick your head out so it's a couple inches closer to the camera than it normally would be it stretches all the skin on your neck and voila - no more double chin! The trick is to stretch it directly towards the camera and then lower your chin back to normal as people have a tendency of sticking their head up when they do this. Physically lower your chin while your head is sticking out, do not bring it back into your body. When your head is on the same plane as it would normally be but simply a couple inches closer to the camera double chins can disappear. Remember photographs are two dimensional so if done correctly those couple inches your head is closer to the camera will never be noticed from the camera, but the lack of double chins will be.

#7 Just before the photograph is taken make a conscious effort to remind yourself to relax your shoulders. People can get uptight and tense up when being photographed without even being aware of it. One way this affects the body is by tightening and raising the shoulders. Dropping your shoulders down will make you look much more relaxed. You'll instantly feel better which often leads to a better expression on your face. It's amazing how quickly you can tense up and the shoulder can raise up so keep reminding yourself of this before every photograph.

#8 Avoid stripes, checks and patterns. Solid colours are much better for photographs as they prevent your clothing from overpowering the photograph and take attention away from your face. Darker colours are more slimming in general. If you have thicker arms longer sleeves are much more flattering for women. Spaghetti straps show off your bicep and shoulder. That part of your body can easily be equal in size compared to the mask of your face, drawing attention to your arm rather than keeping it at your face (especially if your arm/shoulder is not tanned). This is especially true for closeup and half length photographs.



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#9 If you have a tendency to blink in photographs close your eyes. Ask the person with the camera to give you a count down and open your eyes just before they take the photograph. This trick also works when you are facing the Sun and you are squinting. Opening your eyes at the last second will give just enough time to take the photograph before you start squinting again.

#10 Never stand in front of a group of people. That will make you look disproportionately larger than everyone else. Instead try to be on the same plain as the other people distance wise from the camera so you look in proper proportion.

#11 Bonus tip:

Wider angle lenses and regular (normal) lenses are much more common than a telephoto. Unless the person taking the photograph really knows what they are doing, photographing someone up close with a normal or wide angle lens will distort the face and exaggerate the size of the person's nose. It's much better to ask them to step back and zoom in as you'll look more flattering usually in the end.

Of course a true professional who specializes in Portraiture knows exactly how to pose, light and photograph people in such a way as to flatter them, no matter their size, shape or age. Master Photographer Bruce Allen Hendricks MPA, F.Ph, F/PPOC, CPP of Impact Photographic Design specializes in making people look their very best in all types of photographs. Contact the studio today and arrange for a time to meet to discuss and design your portraits.

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